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ANNUAL REPORT 1951

*of the Special Services
After-Care Sub-Committee*



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REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL SERVICES AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE

PRESENTED TO THE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1st December, 1952

E. L. RUSSELL,
Chief Education Officer

MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEARS 1950-51

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(*Chairman since 1932*)

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<i>After-Care Visitors</i>	MRS. H. K. FINCH
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<i>Supervisor, Burlington Hall O.C.</i> ...	MISS W. LUCK
<i>Acting Supervisor, Farm Street O.C.</i> ...	MRS. P. FOWKES (<i>until 30th April—Centre closed</i>)
<i>Supervisor, Glebe Farm O.C.</i> ...	MRS. M. BUSBY
<i>Supervisor, Kingstanding O.C.</i> ...	MISS O. WOOLLEY
<i>Supervisor, Moseley Road O.C.</i> ...	MISS V. ROBINSON (<i>until 31st March</i>)
	MRS. F. HOWELL (<i>from 1st April</i>)
<i>Supervisor, Weoley Castle O.C.</i> ...	MISS E. LAMB
<i>Supervisor, Wretham Road O.C.</i> ...	MRS. E. COOKSEY (<i>from 1st May</i>)
<i>Supervisor, Burlington Hall Industrial Centre</i> ...	MR. J. LAMB

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Special Services After-Care Sub-Committee

ANNUAL REPORT
1951

The Special Services After-Care Sub-Committee, which provides supervision for all leavers from Birmingham Schools for the educationally subnormal, and organizes training for ineducable children, has pleasure in presenting its 51st Annual Report.

This year, reports are appended on two experiments:—the training provided in the Industrial Centre and the success of the first holiday organized in this area for ineducable children.

The remainder of the year's work is dealt with in the usual way.

The Sub-Committee again wish to thank all those who have so readily co-operated in this work.

CASES DEALT WITH DURING 1951

During the year, 3,913 cases have been dealt with. This number consists of 3,555 handed over from the previous year, 310 new cases reported during 1951, the remainder being old cases re-traced or returned for supervision during the year. Of the total 3,913 cases dealt with, 3,430 remain on the current file for supervision during the coming year, (*i.e.* groups a, b, c and d).

The figure 310, of cases reported for the first time, shows a fall of 42 from last year's total of 352 new cases.

- (a) CASES LIVING AT HOME AND GAINFULLY EMPLOYED,
(Males, 1,387; Females, 745; Total 2,132).

Again this year the proportion of employed cases shows a slight increase over the previous year. It is interesting to note that for the second year in succession this increase appears to be mainly due to still more married women taking up employment in addition to their home duties.

There is also a slight increase in the proportion of excluded males under statutory supervision—*i.e.* the lowest grade men in employment—while in the other groups of men a slight tendency the other way is apparent. Taken over the whole, the numbers in the different types of work show very little variation. There is an increase from 27 to 33 engaged in gardening and farming. This is almost entirely due to the acceptance for training under the Y.M.C.A. Farming Scheme of several of our more recent school leavers. There is an increase of some 13 or so women engaged in canteen work, while the sewing trades show a decline from 14 to 7. By far the largest group is that of the unskilled and semi-skilled factory workers. While the numbers in this group have dropped from 1,068 to 877 there has been an equivalent increase in other similar grades of work in trades such as plumbing, painting and spraying. There is no doubt that by the end of the year it was more difficult to find employment, and although Birmingham is fortunate in being able to absorb a great amount of unskilled labour, the next year may show that saturation point has been reached. Several men and women visited by officers of this department have been paid off as redundant more than once by different firms but so far only a very small proportion has not been able to find alternative employment within a short time.

The following are interesting examples of men and women under supervision:—

“A” is a man of 25 under Statutory Supervision. He has been brought up by foster-parents who provide him with an excellent home. With this stable support behind him he has progressed well in his employment with the British Railways and is at present engaged as a shunter, undertaking the usual night-shifts as well as day-time work.

“B” is a man of 23, also under Statutory Supervision. He is employed by a dairy company and is in charge of a milk round, including the keeping of accounts. He found doing these very difficult at first but refused to give up and now states that he feels completely in command of his job. He earns about £8 per week. In his spare time he breeds poultry, travelling all over the Midlands to select his fowls. He is saving and hopes eventually to set up in his own poultry-breeding business.

“C” is the rather unusual case of a girl under Statutory Supervision who was excluded from school as ineducable at the age of 12 years and subsequently attended an Occupation Centre until she was 18. She then had three years at home during which her mother gave her excellent training in the house. Although she would certainly not have been employable at 18 it has now been possible to place her at the age of 21 in a simple packing job. Her earnings on piece-work average £4 5s. per week.

“D” is a boy aged 16, under Voluntary Supervision, who left school in March, 1951. He was unhappy at home where he unsuccessfully tried to shield his mother from his father. He asked to be allowed to leave home and undergo a course in farming. He was accepted for the Y.M.C.A. “British Boys for British Farms” scheme and is now happily placed in employment. Much of this success is due to the real efforts of the farmer to whom he was first sent, who tactfully and sympathetically dealt with “D’s” frequent moods of resentment and bitterness.

CASES DEALT WITH DURING 1951

	a		b		c		d		e		f		g		h		TOTALS											
	At home and gainfully employed	F	M	At home and <i>not</i> gainfully employed	F	M	In H.M. Forces	F	M	In Homes, Hospitals, etc. during 1951	F	M	Admitted to M.D. Institutions during 1951	F	M	Further contact impossible during 1951		F	M	Presented to Case Committee during 1951	F	M	Reported Deceased during 1951	F	M	F	M and F	
A—Left school at 16 and placed under (1) Vol. Supervision (2) Stat. Supervision																												
	42	25	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	76	53	6	8	—	—	—	1	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
B—Left school prior to 1951 and under (1) Vol. Supervision (2) Stat. Supervision																												
	361	218	15	121	34	—	8	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	711	362	43	190	4	—	25	12	7	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
C—Excluded during 1951	3	3	53	29	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D—Excluded prior to 1951	194	84	328	341	1	—	33	28	18	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS, 1951	1387	745	446	691	39	—	72	50	29	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS, 1950	1420	773	442	773	35	4	62	46	35	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TRADES FOLLOWED BY THOSE WHO ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

OCCUPATION	VOL.		STAT.		EXCLUDED		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M and F
Assembling and packing ...	30	60	48	137	11	31	89	228	317
Bakery and food manufacture	9	3	24	6	5	1	38	10	48
Blacksmith	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Boot repairing	21	—	19	—	2	—	42	—	42
Building trades	32	—	85	—	13	—	130	—	130
Cardboard boxmaking ...	—	—	1	6	1	2	2	8	10
Chemical trades	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	1
Cinema and entertainments ...	5	5	11	6	2	1	18	12	30
Cleaning and domestic ...	1	15	—	29	1	11	2	55	57
Clerical	1	7	—	2	—	—	1	9	10
Electrical work	6	—	12	2	—	—	18	2	20
French polishing	—	—	5	—	—	—	5	—	5
Garage	4	—	9	—	—	—	13	—	13
Gardening and farming ...	10	—	18	—	6	—	34	—	34
Glass trade	—	—	4	—	3	—	7	—	7
Hairdressing	—	2	1	—	—	—	1	2	3
Hotel, café and canteen work ...	1	14	3	30	2	10	6	54	60
Factory work:									
unskilled and semi-skilled ...	167	114	327	151	97	19	591	284	875
Laundry	—	7	1	12	—	5	1	24	25
Leather trade	2	1	4	5	1	2	7	8	15
Nursing and care of children ...	—	3	—	1	—	—	—	4	4
Odd jobs and errands... ..	12	—	10	4	25	4	47	8	55
Painting and decorating ...	10	—	11	—	—	—	21	—	21
Paper manufacture	2	—	7	—	1	1	10	1	11
Plating, jewellery & optical trades	3	2	9	2	—	—	12	4	16
Plumbing	6	—	14	—	2	—	22	—	22
Remploy	1	—	4	—	—	—	5	—	5
Roadwork	5	—	10	—	—	—	15	—	15
Salvage	6	—	17	—	8	—	31	—	31
Stabling and kennel work ...	4	1	1	—	3	—	8	1	9
Tailoring and sewing	—	4	—	3	—	—	—	7	7
Transport & distributive trades	28	—	64	1	9	—	101	1	102
Upholstering	3	—	5	1	—	—	8	1	9
Window cleaning	3	—	8	—	2	—	13	—	13
Woodwork	20	—	45	—	2	—	67	—	67
Salesmen and shop assistants...	5	5	9	10	1	—	15	15	30
Painting and spraying ...	2	—	—	7	—	—	2	7	9
Miners	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Firemen	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
TOTALS	403	243	787	415	197	87	1387	745	2,132

"E" is a girl of 16 under Voluntary Supervision. Upon leaving school she took a typing and shorthand training course against the advice of both the Youth Employment and After-Care Departments. By working very hard at home she succeeded in just passing some of the elementary examinations. This was not achieved without strain and several times the mother was approached and warned not to press the girl beyond her limitations. The girl herself was most anxious to continue and clearly, by her ambitious talk, did not herself realise how little she could hope to attain of what she planned. At last she was persuaded to give up the shorthand at least for the time being, this being the section she found most difficult. She is now employed as a copy-typist with sympathetic employers but still retains ambitions to pass further speed tests. It is to be hoped that as she settles in her present employment she may eventually give up these ideas for since her evening studies stopped she has appeared happier and less nervous and has gained weight.

(b) NOT GAINFULLY EMPLOYED (Males, 446; Females, 691; Total, 1,137).

Engaged in:	VOL.		STAT.		STAT. EX.		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M & F
Home duties ...	—	69	—	143	—	33	—	245	245
Helping local tradesmen	—	—	—	—	6	—	6	—	6
Attending O.Cs. or I.Cs.	1	1	6	—	141	80	148	81	229
Having home training	—	—	—	—	18	21	18	21	39
Receiving other tuition	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4	4
No occupation ...	15	53	43	55	216	232	274	340	614
TOTALS ...	16	123	49	198	381	370	446	691	1,137

HOME DUTIES, 245. All persons noted in this category are women fully occupied in managing the home or taking the major part in its running. Those who, in addition, are employed, have been included under the heading of "Gainfully employed."

HELPING LOCAL TRADESMEN, 6. This category comprises the type of boy who formerly occupied himself by helping tradesmen as he was bored by having nothing to do at home. The opening in 1950 of the Industrial Centre which provides both interesting occupations and facilities for training and its extension during 1951 has caused a sharp fall in the number in this category.

ATTENDING OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRIAL CENTRES, 229. This number has risen since 1950 by 24, the increase being accounted for mainly by the additional accommodation provided during the year at the Industrial Centre, and the new Occupation Centre opened at Wretham Road, Handsworth. This latter Centre replaced the original one at Farm Street and has accommodation for 30 children as compared with a maximum of 18 at Farm Street. By the end of the year there were approximately 30 children attending each of the six Occupation Centres and two classes of 20 each attending the Industrial Centre on alternate days.

The children continue to receive school meals and milk and periodical visits from the school medical officer and nurses.

One interesting experiment has been introduced during the year. For the first time physically handicapped defective children have been admitted to Occupation Centres and a taxi service has been provided to convey them. Many problems have been encountered in connection with the running of this service and with rises in the cost of petrol it has proved very expensive per head. About 12-14 children have used this service during 1951 and these include children suffering from cerebral palsy, heart lesions, partial blindness and epilepsy. Some of the children who travel by public transport in the care of guides suffer from these same disabilities but to a less degree; special transport is only provided for children who, without it, would not be able to attend a Centre at all. The presence of such children at the Centres has imposed extra strain on the staff and great care has been necessary to ensure that the conditions are suitable for the individual child. In all cases without exception considerable benefit has been derived. Even in the case of a boy suffering from spastic quadriplegia who is practically helpless, his enjoyment of the company of the other children and his efforts to join in have warranted the difficulty in bringing him. Such children either have chairs kept at the Centres or bring their chairs by taxi daily. The effect on the other children at these Centres has been interesting. In almost all cases the able-bodied children have welcomed these handicapped children and, unasked, have taken some responsibility for them, either by fetching and carrying or by informing staff when help is needed. They have never been allowed to feel out of the group and where they are unable to join in such activities as physical training they are placed near the teacher at the piano and encouraged to clap, beat time or in some way participate.

RECEIVING HOME TRAINING, 39. Three persons are now engaged in training in their own homes children who for one reason or another are not attending Centres. The majority of such children receive a full morning or afternoon period of training once a week, although some of the older girls receive only fortnightly visits. In the cases of the children who are waiting to be admitted to Occupation Centres as much as possible of the Occupation Centre curriculum is introduced and, wherever possible, the children are grouped together in twos and threes in each other's homes so that some form of social training can be included. A small number are children whose parents do not want them to attend Occupation Centres. All who receive training in their own homes are invited to join in functions at their nearest Occupation Centre and such events as Christmas parties are not only much enjoyed at the time, but serve to introduce children to the Centres they will later attend.

RECEIVING OTHER TUITION, 4. Four parents pay fees either to a private school or tutor to instruct their children, in preference to allowing them to attend an Occupation Centre.

NO OCCUPATION, 610. As stated in previous reports the great majority of defectives in this group are either able to be of some use in the home or are helpless or ill. Some are awaiting institutional accommodation and for these, the prospects of early admission are hardly more hopeful than in 1950. The homes of children who are violent,

restless and destructive are among the most distressing of all those visited, and the plight of their mothers, the most grievous, for so little practical help can be offered, and little hope held out. Sympathy may temporarily help to soothe a distraught parent but does not solve the problem. Concrete help in the form of more institutional accommodation continues to be the most acute and pressing need and until that is forthcoming the parents—particularly the mothers—must of necessity continue to suffer severely.

While it is hoped to open a Training Centre for older girls and women, it is unlikely that this project will mature within the next year or so. To provide these people with a little training and social life a weekly sewing class is held at one of the Occupation Centres which is well attended by about 18 or 20 girls and women ranging from 15 to 40 in age.

All unemployable men and women over 16 continue to receive National Assistance grants.

(c) IN H.M. FORCES, 39.

Thirty-four of this total are men under Voluntary Supervision, the majority of whom are serving their two years' Army Service. The remainder are cases under Statutory Supervision who volunteered and were accepted in spite of the usual forms sent to the parents and Ministry of Labour to prevent this. One has been demobilized during the year after completing his term of service, apparently satisfactorily. No complaints have been received to date about the others.

(d) RECEIVING RESIDENTIAL CARE IN HOMES, ETC.

	VOL.		STAT.		EXCL.		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M & F
Mental Hospitals ...	10	6	16	11	20	20	46	37	83
Infirmaries and Homes ...	—	1	1	1	2	2	3	4	7
Sanatoria ...	1	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	2
Epileptic Colonies ...	—	1	2	—	—	—	2	1	3
Prisons and Borstals ...	2	—	5	—	—	1	7	1	8
Children's Homes ...	—	—	1	—	11	7	12	7	19
TOTALS ...	13	8	26	12	33	30	72	50	122

The majority of those in Mental Homes and Infirmaries are persons who will require residential care for the rest of their lives but a few are short-stay cases who will return to their own homes within a few months.

The Children's Homes include private homes, residential nurseries and homes run by the Children's Committee. Those mentally-handicapped and homeless children who are in homes primarily intended for normal children, are usually retained only until a vacancy in an institution arises. A few are accommodated in private homes specially run for defective children.

(e) ADMITTED TO M.D. INSTITUTIONS DURING 1951, 53.

The figure is four below the number admitted to such institutions during 1950, a number itself lower than that for each of the two previous

years. The decrease is, however, almost counterbalanced by the increased number of children maintained by the Regional Hospital Board in private homes.

As already mentioned under "No Occupation," the lack of vacancies in certified institutions causes insoluble problems in families where there are unmanageable and violent children.

The following are examples of a few of the typical cases for whom the Mental Health Services were able to obtain vacancies during 1951:—

"F", a boy aged 9, idiot grade, having severe and frequent E.P. fits, whose mother died during the year.

"G", a boy aged 18, showing signs of general deterioration and anti-social tendencies making life a misery for family.

"H", a boy aged 4, suffering from E.P. fits, incontinent and violent, with a mother suffering from tuberculosis.

"I", a boy aged 18, charged with being putative father to the child of low grade girl of 14.

"J", a boy aged 4, who screamed continuously day and night.

"K", a girl of 13, suffering from spastic diplegia, helpless and too heavy for the mother to lift; the mother admitted to hospital for operation.

"L", a refractory girl aged 18, who ran away from home on several occasions, stayed out late at night, refused to work and now suspected of stealing.

"M", a woman aged 30, of low mentality, excitable, given to tearing her clothes, who had been living alone with eccentric mother in a state of poverty.

Of the 53 admitted, the conditions were as follows:—

following illness of mother	...	...	...	9
„ death of a parent	...	...	...	8
„ Court cases	...	...	...	6
as a result of deterioration	...	...	...	18
„ „ „ „ refractory behaviour	...	...	...	5
in a state of neglect	...	...	...	1
transferred from Prison	...	...	...	2
„ „ a Mental Hospital...	...	...	...	1
„ „ Children's Homes	...	...	...	2
„ „ residential special school	...	...	...	1
				<hr/>
				53
				<hr/>

(f) FURTHER CONTACT IMPOSSIBLE, 15.

Of these 15, 11 left the district and were referred to other Authorities for supervision; one—a man of 20—removed to Liverpool but his address

was not available; two have been lost sight of during the year, and in the case of one woman, visits were resented so much that further co-operation became impossible.

(g) PRESENTED TO CASE COMMITTEE, 398.

The Case Committee considers the cessation of visitation where men and women appear to be reasonably stabilized and secure and when reports show a steady record for some years. Those under Statutory Supervision are seldom considered before the age of 25. Cases under Voluntary Supervision are sometimes referred at a younger age and when they have completed a period in the Forces, visits usually cease after it can be shown that they have settled successfully into civilian life.

Of the 398 presented to the Case Committee during 1951,

117 were women under Voluntary Supervision

113 „ „ „ Statutory „

94 „ men „ Voluntary „

74 „ „ „ Statutory „

(h) REPORTED DECEASED DURING 1951, 17.

Causes of death were believed to be as follows:—

General deterioration	...	5
Epilepsy	...	3
Tuberculosis	...	2
Pneumonia	...	1
Starvation (self imposed)	...	1
T.B. meningitis	...	1
Cerebral tumour	...	1
Heart disease	...	1
Influenza	...	1
Bronchitis	...	1
		<hr/> 17

Three cases were under 16 years of age and two were over 65 years of age.

DELINQUENCY

Fifty-eight charges against 50 persons are known to have been made during 1951, *i.e.* 8 persons were charged twice within the year. Of the remainder, 12 had already been convicted once before 1951, four had two, two had five and one had seven previous convictions. These numbers are almost identical with those for 1950.

Of the total number charged, only two were women, both of whom are under Statutory Supervision. Of the 48 men charged, 46 are under Statutory Supervision, 11 being “excluded” cases. The remaining two are under Voluntary Supervision. It is believed that more persons under Voluntary Supervision may have been in trouble, but while the Police

refer to the Mental Health Services persons under Statutory Supervision who are charged with offences, no reference to the After-Care Department is made in the case of persons under Voluntary Supervision. If the persons concerned, or their parents, withhold the information, the After-Care Department may be unaware that they have been in trouble.

The following are the offences with which they were charged:—

Larceny	28
House, shop and factory breaking ...	12
Indecent assault... ..	5
Forgery	2
Assault	2
Disorderly conduct	3
Carnal knowledge	1
Driving a vehicle without licence ...	1
Persistently importuning	1
Malicious wounding	1
In need of Care and Protection ...	1
Failing to pay maintenance	1
	<hr/>
	58
	<hr/>

The following list shows the results of the proceedings:—

Placed on Probation	17
Fined	10
Imprisoned	8
Certified under M.D. Acts	7
Committed to Borstals	5
Discharged conditionally	4
„ absolutely	3
Disqualified from driving	2
	<hr/>
	56
	<hr/>

Note: The difference between the totals is accounted for by the fact that in some cases, more than one charge was dealt with at the same time.

Of the total number of cases, 23 were 17-18 years old, and 10 between 21 and 23 years. The remainder varied between 13 years and 44 years.

THE INDUSTRIAL CENTRE

The Industrial Centre was opened in January, 1950 under the charge of a Supervisor, with 12 boys in each of the two classes, one of which met on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the other on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The majority of boys in the Junior Group (3 days per week) are transferred directly from Occupation Centres, although a few are admitted after being excluded from Special Schools without having attended an Occupation Centre first. This group caters for $14\frac{1}{2}$ —18 year-olds and the Senior Group trains boys and men over 18 and of any age up to about 40 at present.

All attending are unemployable, although a few of the younger ones may be employable at a later date.

The curriculum includes woodwork, leatherwork, boot-repairing, rug-making, clay modelling and some physical training including weekly visits to the nearby park for football.

The lads vary greatly in ability, from those able to make excellent rugs unaided, to those capable of doing little more than sandpapering. Most of the woodwork and boot-repairing has to be closely supervised and few are able to remember instructions for more than one very simple step at a time. Some boys can undertake their own measuring, not by using a numbered rule, but by comparing with a length of string or wood given them.

As already mentioned earlier in this report, most of the lads who used to occupy themselves by helping tradesmen are now incorporated in the Industrial Centre and receiving a useful training. Those who had found for themselves an occupation before the Centre was opened are the most encouraging to train. They are the lads with most initiative, often in mischief if unoccupied, but with interest and some degree of concentration if their energies are directed into the right channels. It is from this group that a few may later become employed.

The improvement in self-discipline after some months of attendance is noticeable, the lads becoming steadier and more controlled by having a fairly regular routine and a job on which to concentrate.

More accommodation is needed yet, and there are some parts of the City from which the journey is too far to the present Centre. It is hoped to open a second Industrial Centre during 1952 in the south of the City which will be more easily accessible from some of the more outlying areas, and this will also allow a greater number of pupils to be trained.

MENTALLY DEFECTIVE CHILDREN ON HOLIDAY

When plans were made for taking groups of excluded children on holiday it was felt that unless some of the difficult and low-grade children were to be included the experiment would not be justified. Healthy and reasonably independent defective children can be accepted with their parents in holiday resorts or by various associations in holiday homes, but no one will take severely crippled, epileptic, restless or very helpless children. Yet it is the parents of those children who most need a rest. Plans were therefore made to take at least a proportion of such children.

Windmill House, the holiday home of the Association of Girls' and Mixed Clubs, was obtained for the purpose and some time before the holiday, the house was visited by the School Medical Officer and a member of the Architect's Branch, as well as representatives from the Mental Health and After-Care Departments. It was decided that apart from having removable guards fixed in all upstairs windows no further preparation was necessary. It was agreed with the Warden that a rubber sheet for each bed should be supplied. The house would accommodate satisfactorily the 25 children whom it was hoped to take in each group as well as eight staff, consisting of 2 Supervisors, 2 Assistant Supervisors, 2 Welfare Attendants, 1 kitchen attendant and 1 school nurse. These staff were drawn from different Occupation Centres, one Supervisor was appointed to be in charge and a rota was drawn up so that four staff were on duty at one time during the day and two at night.

Accordingly, on Monday, 24th September, a party of 25 children varying in age from 4—16 years was taken to Windmill House for a week's holiday and a second party of 22 children from 11—17 years on Monday, 8th October. Both parties included boys and girls, but the first party consisted mainly of mixed juniors with only a few girls over 12 years. The children were selected as being those most urgently in need of a holiday, either for the sake of their own health or that of their parents. In accordance with the Ministry of Health's stipulation, all were children who had not had any other holiday during the year; in actual fact the majority of the children taken had never before been on any holiday at all, and very few had ever been separated over night from their families. All except five were children attending Occupation Centres.

There was no doubt that all the children, without exception, derived intense enjoyment from a week in the country, as well as noticeable benefit to their health. For many of them it was their first experience of seeing the countryside, and from the start their reactions to new situations were lively and interesting to watch. After the first strangeness had worn off the children were eager to explore the grounds, which consist of a garden containing swings and see-saws, orchard and large paddock in which a donkey and pony graze. These surroundings provided the children with unlimited interests, from the picking up of windfalls to collecting chestnuts which had a magical effect in dispersing apathy and afforded a harmless outlet for any energies which might otherwise have found expression in anti-social behaviour.

Four examples of the children's reactions are worth mentioning. One boy, who is difficult at the Occupation Centre because of his acquisitive tendencies, had amassed by the end of the week a larger collection of

chestnuts than any of the others. These were hoarded in a cardboard box under his bed and he made no attempt to pilfer any of the other children's belongings. A boy and a girl each developed a surprisingly observant interest in bird watching. The girl came from the poorest of homes and had never been in the country before. For many weeks afterwards those two children continued talking about the birds they had seen. The girl also mentioned from time to time that in the country apples grew on trees. This she found a delightful joke when one knew that they really grew in shops. The final example is that of a girl of 14 who had almost been omitted from the party because of her difficulty in negotiating stairs. Up to the time when she went to Windmill House she was very much dependent on others for help at the Occupation Centre, but it was felt that much of her unsteadiness was due to lack of confidence. After one day at Windmill House she began to look after herself and then other children as well. By the time she went home her walking was almost normal and this improvement has been maintained.

Problems were of course encountered, the main one being the difficulty of dealing adequately with verminous children, although all had been examined medically and for cleanliness either two or three days prior to going. After finding some members of the first group re-infected by the day of departure, the second group were given a further examination on the day they were due to depart and cleansed and reclothed at a school clinic before leaving.

There is no doubt that the experiment was successful and well worth making into a yearly event. The hardest work was at the beginning of each week and by the end the children had just begun to gain the maximum from their holiday. While a period of a fortnight would more than double the benefit to both the children and parents it is unlikely that the financial situation will allow for such an ideal to be considered at present. It is hoped, however, to be able to continue taking four groups per year for one week each, and plans are already made for the next two groups to go in March, 1952. It is also hoped to be able to include some older low-grade defectives in the party.

